

REMARKS

This Response and Amendment addresses the Office Action mailed August 11, 2004. In the Office Action, the previous rejections were withdrawn, for which the Applicant is appreciative. New rejections of the claims were made based on U.S. Patent No. 4,675,018 to Harden (hereinafter "Harden") and other references. Applicants respectfully traverse the claim rejections.

In the interest of expediting prosecution, Applicants have canceled claims 2-79 and have amended claim 1. Claim 1 includes the subject matter of claim 7, which was previously indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, the only pending claim is claim 1 that includes subject matter that the Examiner indicated would be allowable if written in independent form. Claim 1 is the only claim pending in this case. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request allowance of the application at the earliest possible date.

REQUEST TO CHANGE IN INVENTORSHIP

Applicants respectfully request amendment of the inventorship to delete Daniel H. Pommerening, Clinton S. Vilks, and Mark Henry Faust as inventors, so that Michael Blomquist and Gail Bynum remain as the only inventors. This request is accompanied by an authorization to deduct Deposit Account 13-2725 for the processing fee of \$130 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(i). Due to claim cancellation, the claims currently pending in the present application do not involve inventorship by the deleted inventors.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Applicants appreciate the telephone interview conducted between Examiner DeSanto and Applicants' Representative Kate DeVries Smith on November 16, 2004. The Examiner's interpretation of the Harden reference was discussed in detail, namely that the needle end of Harden allegedly taught the open end of the claims. Procedural options were also discussed. Agreement was not reached.

CONCLUSION

A notice of allowance is requested. The Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned if it would be helpful in any way.

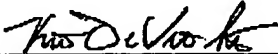
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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Date: Dec. 10, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300


Katherine M. DeVries Smith
Reg. No. 42,157
KDS:cjm/PLSklg

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